

Date: May 21, 2020
Subject: Six Month Au Pair Extensions Beyond Maximum Duration

Dear Au pair Sponsors:

The Department of State (Department) appreciates your continued efforts in addressing the health, safety, and welfare concerns of your exchange visitors during this challenging time. In order to help sponsors manage the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, this email contains important information regarding an optional one-time opportunity to seek a six-month extension for au pairs who have already extended their programs beyond the initial first year. (Requests for extensions for first-year au pairs under 22 CFR § 62.32(o) should be made pursuant to the usual practice.)

Due to the extreme challenges that COVID-19 has presented for travel and other aspects of our exchanges, the Department wants to confirm to sponsors that it expects to look favorably upon sponsors' requests pursuant to 22 CFR § 62.32(o) to extend the programs of au pairs in their first year, as well as requests pursuant to 22 CFR § 62.43(c) to extend programs for six months beyond maximum duration for au pairs currently in their second year of their exchange programs. This initiative recognizes the difficulty some au pairs may have returning home, the lack of visa services for new au pairs and difficulty of traveling to the United States, and the need of families to maintain au pair arrangements in order to return to the workplace and facilitate the reopening of the economy.

To pursue a six-month extension beyond maximum duration under 22 CFR § 62.43(c), au pair sponsors with exchange visitors in their second year on the program must reassess the eligibility of both those au pairs and their host families. To be eligible for the extension, au pairs will need to be compliant with all Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) regulations and sponsor policies. If au pairs were unable to complete the educational component of their program due to, e.g., school closures, state lock-down requirements, or social distancing restrictions, they should nevertheless submit their grades/credits earned as 22 CFR § 62.31(k) requires. In these instances, au pairs should fully report all activities (complete and incomplete) and explain the circumstance that prevented the completion of their educational components.

Once au pairs sponsors have identified eligible au pairs and host families, they can reach out to such au pairs and their host families to determine their interest and availability in extending for an additional six-month period. After confirming host families and au pairs both wish to seek extensions, the sponsors must secure letters from both the host families and au pairs agreeing to extend an additional six-months through a contract compliant with the EVP regulations.

Next, au pair sponsors should submit a request for this one-time additional six-month extension in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for all interested and eligible au pairs. Program end dates in these requests cannot be later than six months after the exchange visitors' current program end dates. Sponsors should continue to monitor SEVIS records and apply for this six-month extension prior to the au pairs' program end dates, if possible. Finally, au pair sponsors must submit an extension justification for each exchange visitor to DesignationAuPair@state.gov by **June 30, 2020**. Extension requests must include updated

contracts between host families and au pairs, reassessment of the au pairs' eligibility, the reasons that justify the extension, and a completed "Six-month au pair extension request" Excel spreadsheet (see attachment). This spreadsheet requires the following information for each au pair: (1) SEVIS identification number, (2) full name (last name, first name), (3) date of birth, (4) country of citizenship, (5) sponsor program number, (6) the requested program end date, and (7) Pay.gov receipt for the \$367 extension fee.

Once the Office of Designation has granted extension requests for one or more eligible au pairs, sponsors should reprint Forms DS-2019 for those au pairs whose programs are extended and provide the au pairs with updated and signed forms as soon as possible.

The Department is continuing to monitor closely the COVID-19 situation and its effect on the EVP. We will supplement this guidance with additional information and/or will adjust our guidance, as needed.

Once again, thank you for your work, patience, and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times together.

Sincerely,

Office of Private Sector Exchange